

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6750

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

SECDEF

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 00044

LIMDIS

VIENNA FOR USDEL MBFR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM

SUBJECT: MBFR-BRITISH VIEWS ON NEXT STEPS

1. DEAN, DEP. US REP MBFR, STOPPED IN LONDON BRIEFLY DECEMBER 29 FOR INFORMAL DISCUSSION OF MBFR WITH TICKELL AND WIGGIN OF FOREIGN OFFICE. DEAN GAVE BRITISH OFFICIALS HIS IMPRESSIONS OF COURSE OF MBFR NEGOTIATIONS AND NOTED THAT NO FIRM US DECISIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN ON NEXT STEPS.

2. WIGGIN AND TICKELL SAID THAT NO FIRM DECISIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN WHITEHALL ON HOW THEY THINK ALLIES MIGHT PROCEED BUT THEY OUTLINED FOR US VARIOUS IDEAS NOW BEING DISCUSSED AT OFFICIAL LEVEL. WITHIN LAST WEEK ROSE AND PECK HAVE BEEN IN LONDON AND THERE HAS BEEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION OF STATUS OF MBFR NEGOTIATIONS IN WHICH BRITISH CHIEFS OF STAFF HAVE TAKEN PART. TRENDS IN OFFICIAL-LEVEL THINKING IN LONDON ARE SUMMARIZED

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BELOW.

3. UKDEL MBFR THINKS THAT SOVIETS HAVE DISCOUNTED US REDUCTIONS IN MBFR CONTEXT, BELIEVING THAT THESE WILL BE MADE UNILATERALLY WHATEVER HAPPENS IN MBFR. ACCORDINGLY SOVIETS ARE FOCUSING ON EUROPEAN REDUCTIONS IN EFFORT TO FRUSTRATE WESTERN EUROPEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION. A PRIME TARGET OF THE EAST IS THE BUNDESWEHR. FCO TENDS TO AGREE WITH THIS ANALYSIS. IMMEDIATE QUESTION IN MINDS OF WHITEHALL OFFICIALS IS HOW TO PROCEED AFTER RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS. TICKELL SAID THAT HE SEES DANGERS IN FOCUSING SO HARD ON GETTING SOVIETS TO CONCENTRATE ON US/SOVIET REDUCTIONS THAT SOVIETS SEEK TO EXACT AS A PRICE CONCESSIONS WEST COULD NOT ACCEPT. WHEN AND HOW WEST MAKES COMMITMENT TO PHASE II IS THEREFORE A KEY QUESTION. EXCESSIVE WESTERN COMMITMENT TO PHASE II SHOULD BE AVOIDED. THEREFORE, TICKELL SUGGESTED, WEST SHOULD CONTINUE TO TALK ABOUT ITS PROPOSALS, WAITING TO SEE WHAT SOVIET DELEGATION BRINGS BACK FROM MOSCOW AT END OF RECESS. AND HE THOUGHT THE WEST SHOULD BE LESS NERVOUS ABOUT ADDRESSING AND CRITICIZING THE SOVIET PROPOSALS.

4. TICKELL SPECIFICALLY SUGGESTED THAT WEST MIGHT CONCENTRATE ON INDUCING THE EAST TO DISCUSS A COMMON DATA BASE. PROPOSALS OF BOTH SIDES, HE POINTED OUT, REST ON CONCEPT OF PERCENTAGE REDUCTIONS. IT WOULD THEREFORE BE LOGICAL TO TALK IN NEXT STAGE ABOUT DATA. DOING SO COULD LEAD INTO DISCUSSION OF DISPARITIES AND IN TIME TO ADDRESSING COMMON CEILING CONCEPT. TICKELL NOTED HOWEVER THAT MINISTRY OF DEFENSE THINKS THAT A GOOD DEAL MORE WORK MUST BE DONE TO REFINE WEST'S FIGURES.

5. TICKELL SAID WEST SHOULD NOT BE IN A HURRY AFTER NEGOTIATIONS RESUME ON JANUARY 15. HE THOUGHT ALLIES SHOULD EXPLORE ELEMENTS OF SOVIET PROPOSALS AND CONTINUE TO DEVELOP WESTERN PROPOSITIONS. HE OBSERVED THAT UK WOULD PROBABLY CONSIDER IT PROFITABLE TO SUGGEST TO THE OTHER SIDE THE IDEA OF INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS TO PROBE THE EAST'S IDEAS. IT WAS HE SAID DIFFICULT TO BALANCE THE PLENARY SYSTEM WITH UNRESTRAINED BILATERALS, AND THOUGHT

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A SMALL WESTERN TEAM WHICH COULD TALK QUIETLY WITH EAST WOULD BE AN EFFECTIVE DEVICE. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE WESTERN SIDE BE COMPOSED OF THE US; THE UK AND FRG WHICH COULD ALTERNATE; AND ONE OF THE SMALLER DIRECT PARTICIPANTS.

6. TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF WESTERN EUROPEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION, TICKELL SAID THAT EC NINE REPRESENTATIVES

IN VIENNA MAY HAVE GIVEN AN EXAGGERATED IMPRESSION TO THE
SOVIETS THAT SOMETHING CONCRETE IS HAPPENING. WHILE
THIS EMPHASIS IN VIENNA HAS BEEN BENEFICIAL IN WESTERN

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EUROPEAN TERMS, HE RECOGNIZED THAT THERE WAS PROBABLY
NO FURTHER ADVANTAGE IN PRESSING THE POINT WITH WARSAW
PACT. HE SAID IT WOULD BE INADVISABLE TO SET UP A
WESTERN EUROPEAN CAUCUS IN VIENNA OUT OF CONSIDERATION
FOR CONCERNS OF BOTH US AND FLANK COUNTRIES. NEVERTHE-
LESS IT WAS IN HIS VIEW DESIRABLE FOR WESTERN EUROPEANS
TO CONTINUE TO DISCUSS THEIR COMMON CONCERNS IN VIENNA
INFORMALLY--AS LONG AS THEY CONTINUED TO KEEP THE US
FULLY INFORMED. TICKELL NOTED THAT WESTERN EUROPEANS
HAD NOW MADE CLEAR TO SOVIETS THEIR CONCERN THAT MBFR
OUTCOMES SHOULD NOT IMPEDE WESTERN EUROPEAN DEFENSE
COOPERATION; THERE WAS NO NEED AND IT WAS IN FACT UN-
DESIRABLE TO PURSUE POINT FURTHER AT THIS TIME. IN THIS
CONNECTION TICKELL RESTATED BRITISH VIEW THAT SUBCEILINGS
FOR WESTERN EUROPEAN FORCES WERE NOT ACCEPTABLE.

7. TURNING TO NUCLEAR ASPECTS OF MBFR TICKELL OBSERVED THAT SOME OF THE QUESTIONS WHICH THE BRITISH AND GERMANS HAD LISTED FOR DISCUSSION IN WASHINGTON WERE UNANSWERABLE. BRITISH OBJECTIVE AT JANUARY TALKS WOULD BE TO EXCHANGE OPINIONS RATHER THAN TO REACH DEFINITIVE

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CONCLUSIONS. HE NOTED ONE MATTER OF PARTICULAR POLITICAL IMPORTANCE IN BRITISH VIEW, NAMELY THAT ANY NUCLEAR "MAKE WEIGHT" WHICH WEST MIGHT INTRODUCE SHOULD INVOLVE NUCLEAR CONCESSIONS FROM WARSAW PACT. CONTINUING TICKELL SAID HE HOPED BRITISH AND GERMANS WOULD HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT TO US THEIR THOUGHTS ABO*T HANDLING OF NUCLEAR ASPECTS OF MBFR BEFORE US REACHED HARD AND FAST DECISIONS. HE THEREFORE CONSIDERED JANUARY DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON WITH US OFFICIALS AS OF FIRST IMPORTANCE. BRITISH, HE SAID, HAVE DONE A GREAT DEAL OF WORK ON PROBLEM AND WANT TO PRESENT THEIR THOUGHTS TO US OFFICIALS WITHOUT OUTCOME HAVING BEEN PREJUDGED.

8. SUMMING UP TICKELL SAID (AND WIGGIN UNDERSCORED SAME POINT) THAT BRITISH THINK WEST SHOULD PROCEED AT A DELIBERATE PACE TO EXPLORE WARSAW PACT PROPOSALS AND DEVELOP WESTERN PROPOSALS WITHOUT FEELING ANY PARTICULAR TIME PRESSURE.

9. COMMENT: VIEWS EXPRESSED BY TICKELL AND RE-EMPHASIZED BY WIGGIN SHOW CONSISTENCY OF BRITISH POSITION. BRITISH ARE NOT, AS WIGGIN OBSERVED TO US, UNHAPPY ABOUT PROSPECT OF RELATIVELY LEISURELY EVOLUTION OF AFFAIRS IN VIENNA. BUT, WIGGIN ASSERTED, BRITISH DO NOT INTEND TO PLAY DELAYING ROLE. THEY HAVE NOTED WITH INTEREST ASSESSMENT OF BRITISH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON THAT USG OFFICIALS THINK IMMEDIATE DOMESTIC PRESSURES FOR RAPID PROGRESS ON MBFR ARE LESS EXIGENT, AND BELIEVE WEST'S (AND BRITAIN'S) INTERESTS ARE BEST SERVED BY MOVING SLOWLY TO PROBE SOVIET POSITIONS AND EXPOUND WESTERN IDEAS. CONCEPT OF DEVELOPING COMMON DATA BASE HAS NOT, AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, BEEN GIVEN STATUS OF FORMAL BRITISH POSITION BUT IT FITS IN NEATLY WITH THEIR IDEAS OF STRINGING OUT NEGOTIATIONS. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW HARD THEY WILL PUSH THIS IDEA. IN EMBASSY'S VIEW THERE ARE NO MAJOR SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US AND UK; ANY DIFFERENCES SEEM MORE TACTICAL THAN SUBSTANTIVE. LIKE US, UK IS EXAMINING CLOSELY BEST TACTICS FOR NEXT STEPS. THEIR OVERALL GOAL WILL BE, AS IT HAS BEEN FROM THE FIRST, TO MOVE FORWARD WITH GREATEST CAUTION. YET THEY CONCEDE THAT THEY ARE UNCERTAIN HOW SERIOUS.

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SOVIETS ARE ABOUT MAKING PROGRESS IN MBFR IN LARGER
CONTEXT OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS AND ARE PREPARED TO LOOK
TO US FOR EVALUATION OF SOVIET PURPOSES AND SERIOUSNESS.
IT IS INTERESTING THAT FCO SEEMS TO SHARE JUDGMENT OF
UKDEL VIENNA THAT SOVIETS ARE DISCOUNTING US REDUCTIONS
IN MBFR CONTEXT AND ARE FOCUSING ON WESTERN EUROPEAN
REDUCTIONS. SUCH JUDGMENTS WILL REINFORCE CAUTION WITH
WHICH BRITISH APPROACH NEXT STAGE IN VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS.

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